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HAPPINESS AND JOY ON THE BIRTH OF MANKIND'S SAVIOUR (*sallallaahu alayhi wasallam*)

With the arrival of the month of Rabiul-Owwal certain segments of the Muslim community will once again indulge in what they term 'moulood celebrations'. These festivals are organised with the apparent intention of celebrating the birth of Rasoolullah (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*); hence they are sometimes dubbed *Eid Meeladun-Nabi*, which translates as the Festival of the Birth of the Prophet (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*).

OUR IEMAAN

Expressing joy and happiness for the birth of Our Master (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*) is undoubtedly an act that is most laudable and warrants great merit. In fact, it is an obligation on every Muslim to rejoice at the Birth of Our Master. No one can deny this. This is part of our iemaan, and a Muslim who says he or she is not happy that Hazrat Muhammad (*alayhis-salaatu was-salaam*) was born is a kaafier. The Ulema of this Ummat are unanimous that the birth of Rasoolullah (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*) ranks among the greatest favours of Allah upon this Ummat. To express happiness and delight over this Bounty from Allah is an act of immense reward for it falls under the general command of offering shukr to Allah for His Bounties. The big question is: how do we celebrate this occasion? The form of celebration has not been

mentioned in Quran or Sunnah. Almighty Allah commands us to express happiness over His Grace and Bounty. It appears in Surah Yunus, verse 58: "*Say: They should rejoice over the Grace of Allah and His Mercy.*" The Mercy and Grace spoken of in this verse can refer to the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (*sallallahu alayhi wasallam*) or to the Quran or the Deen of Islam. The books of tafseer mention all of these three elements, because every single one of them is a Bounty of immense significance and they are all inter-related and inter-linked. But the Quran-e-Kareem does not speak of celebration.

A SPURIOUS ARGUMENT

One of the personalities who visits South Africa each year to conduct and participate in moulood celebrations, Dr. Muhammad Ninowy, mentioned the above verse of Surah Yunus in a booklet written to prove the permissibility of the current customary moulood celebrations. However, his attempt was abortive and an exercise in absolute futility. We shall be publishing a refutation of some of the arguments in Dr Ninowy's book Insha Allah.

The command from Allah Ta'ala instructs us to express happiness and joy over His Bounties. This verse neither specifies any particular function or celebration, nor any bounty in particular. One can have

happiness and joy in the heart or it can be expressed verbally in the form of dua or by the utterance of the words *alhamdu-lillah*. Fulfilment of the Commandments of Allah Ta'ala is the greatest way of offering thanks to Allah for His Favours. Our annual festive days, Eidul-Fitr and Al-Adh-Haa are days of worship. The Eid celebration is centred round acts of worship that form the basis of our shukr to Allah.

AN IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE OF SHARIAH

Any activity a Muslim carries out must be free from un-Islamic elements. It must be devoid of such acts that are contrary to Shariah. The purpose of worship is to please Allah, so how can Allah be pleased when the act itself contains violations of His Commands? The supporters of the moulood celebrations have argued that there is nothing in Shariah that prevents congregating to celebrate the birth

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I am the Dua of Ebraheem, the Glad Tidings of Eesa, and the Dream of Aamina

Narrated by Imam Ahmad

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of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam); they claim that in the absence of anything to the contrary, such celebrations would be lawful. We have answered this argument in our booklet on the moulood, titled *Reality of Mee-laad*. However, if for argument's sake we accept this argument and go along with this line of thought then there is another important point that the moulood supporters appear to have completely overlooked, and that is the haraam factors that take place in a moulood gathering. Every moulood gathering nowadays will inevitably have one or more haraam factors that turn the whole event into an unlawful activity. These acts are totally in conflict with the teachings and commandments of that same Rasool whose birth the moulood celebrators have gathered to celebrate. This makes a total mockery of Islam. It makes the whole event a total sham. How do we reconcile haraam actions with the Love for Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)? What kind of Islam is this: we gather to praise our Rasool while at the same time we do the exact opposite of what he had instructed? It is an absolute farce and a blatant insult right in the face of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)

A TARNISHED MOULOOD

The following are some examples of haraam that occur in the moulood celebrations that are held each year here in Port Elizabeth:

NEGLECT OF HIJAAB

The rule of hijab is totally abandoned. While men and women may be seated separately, there is nothing that screens of the men from the women. Each group can see the other. Women

wander into the men's area and even past the stage on which the performers are seated. When entering and leaving the venue, there is free mixing of men and women. It must be borne in mind that since the Law of Hijaab was revealed to Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), there was never ever an occasion where men and women among the Sahaaba mixed freely, even during the times when ladies would attend the Musjid for the five daily prayers. Women who attend the moulood celebrations do not even adhere to the Islamic dress code. The hair is open, dresses are tight-fitting, and even the hijab-clad

The Mission Statement of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)

"I have been sent for the perfection of Good Character"

Narrated by Imam Ahmed

ones are open-faced. Is this how we celebrate the Mission of Our Rasool? To call this an Islamic celebration is a mockery. Was it not the teaching of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) that women should be segregated from men? Was it not the practice of the noble wives of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to cover their faces when leaving the home? If anyone doubts this, we can provide proof from Quran and Hadith to substantiate our claims. But really, a Muslim who claims to celebrate the Noble birth of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) out of love for our Master needs no proof. Such a Muslim who claims to have so immense love does not stand in need of proof for issues that are self-evident and patently clear.

Did the Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) not command the segregation of ladies from menfolk? What type of love is this, that the tongue expresses love while the actions loudly shout out

the contrary? Woe betide such love!

The Commands of Allah

Allah Ta'ala issued three commands to Our Master (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), and there is absolutely no doubt that Our Master Hazrat Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) not only fulfilled these commands to the fullest but also ensured that the Ummat in his time practiced the same. He made dead certain that his family and companions were commanded to fulfil the same orders that were given to him. And by the same token, there is no doubt that the Sahaaba (radhiyallahu anhum) fulfilled these commandments out of love for our Rasool (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). These are the three commandments that came from Allah Ta'ala: "O Nabi: Tell your wives and your daughters and the wives of the believing men that they should draw over

themselves their jilbaabs (cloaks) (when emerging from the home). This is more likely for them to be recognised (as respectable women) so they will not be molested." (Surah Ahzaab, verse 59) The lovers of Our Master (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) will need no prompting towards fulfilling these orders. We who claim to love Allah and His Rasool should be falling over our feet to comply with these commands. Yet, the sad reality is that in the gathering of so-called lovers of The Messenger (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) these very commandments were violated.

Purdah from even the blind

On one occasion the Noble Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) instructed his wives Umme Salma and Maymoonah (radhiyallahu anhum) to make purdah from Ibn Umme Maktum, who was a blind Sahaabi. The reason he gave was that though the blind man could not

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see them, they could still see him. Purdah works both ways, not just from one side. Just as it is haraam for a man to look at a non-mehram woman, it is equally haraam for the woman to look at the man. At the mouloud celebrations a huge TV screen was erected so that the women could see the male performers and actors on stage, as well as the speakers.

The mouloudis cry out: "O Lovers of The Rasool: come in your hundreds to celebrate the meelaad." But there is hidden hypocrisy in this invitation. Those who attend have not shown true love to the Messenger of Allah for they violate his teachings. Such celebrations are meaningless and hollow; they are shallow and pointless. One who disobeys the Rasool of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) can have a hundred celebrations a year; these will never be accepted when the actions of such a person betray disobedience to Allah's Messenger. How will the Messenger of Allah be pleased with these celebrations when a core and key teaching of his Shariah is being violated in these very celebrations?

NEGLECT OF SUNNAH

It was the standard Sunnah of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) to eat on the floor. The small sized table (similar to our modern coffee tables) existed in the time of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and was used by the Romans for eating. Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) specifically prohibited the Sahaaba from eating at such tables and commanded that the food be placed on the floor, on leather table-cloths. This is the Sunnah way. But at the mouloud, people are invited to sit at tables, in emulation of the kuffar style. If the idea of such a big bash is to revive the Sunnah, then why not impose upon people the Sunnah way of eating? This is an ideal time to seat people on the floor for meals

in typical sunnah style. The reality of this whole farcical display is that the organisers and the conductors of this whole program themselves do not practice on the Sunnah; so how can we expect them to encourage others towards the Sunnah.

In answer to this argument, I assume the mouloud organisers will play a famous card, that '*eating on the floor is a small thing; the mouloud has a greater purpose, in the broader scheme of things, to foster lover and unity, etc.*' Well, we are not hoodwinked by such flowery language and subversive argumentation. No sunnah of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) is trivial or 'small'.

Once Huzaifha bin Yamaan (radhiyallahu anhu), a Sahaabi of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) was invited to a meal in the company of some senior roman leaders in Syria. After the meal, as per the sunnah, he began cleaning his plate and licking his fingers. A person next to him remarked that such a practice is considered unethical and unrefined in such civilised company. Huzhaifa (radhiyallahu anhu) was extremely annoyed at this remark, and he loudly exclaimed: "*Shall we discard the Sunnah of our Nabi because of these ignoramuses!?*" This shows the importance the Sahaaba (radhiyallahu anhum) attached to even the seemingly small sunnats.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The use of drums when reciting durood and zikr is another bid'ah that modern sufis have introduced into their system of practice. In the mouloud gathering a special performer group is invited to sing songs to the beat of drums. This group sits on the stage and entertains the crowd. It is akin to the musical concerts and rock bands of the kuffar. From the books of hadith we learn that Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) allowed the use of a certain type of

drum known as the *duff* on **only two occasions**: at the time of nikah and at the time of jihad. And in both cases the idea is not to provide entertainment to people. In Jihad the idea of the *duff* is to instill fear into the enemy, and in Nikah it is to announce the marriage ceremony. The only source of proof that these modern day sufis have for their practice of using the *duff* for zhikr is the practice of the little girls who were singing and beating their drums on the day of Eid in the presence of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). But such proof is insufficient for the purpose they intend. This is indeed scraping the barrel. That was a one off incident that never happened again. And that was before Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) prohibited all musical instruments. The *duff* was excluded from this prohibition on the exclusive two occasions mentioned above. Furthermore, the girls who were beating the drums on that occasion were not entertaining people. This was no rock group or musical brigade out to perform to an audience. It is, therefore, a sign of poor intellect and impaired reasoning to use that incident as a basis.

INTERMINGLING WITH WOMEN

The key-note speaker at the PE Mouloud function as well as some organisers and guests openly and

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Husnul-Khuluq - Good Character

Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

"Good Character melts sin like the sun melts ice; and bad character corrupts deeds like the aloe corrupts honey"

Narrated by Imam Bayhaqi

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unashamedly posed for photographs with women and young girls. Some were photographed shaking hands with non-mehram women. These pictures were circulated on facebook and other forms of media. This is the brand of Islam that moulood celebrators wish to peddle to unwary Muslims, a new-fangled and innovative form of Shariah unheard of in the circles of former Muslims and Islamic Scholars. When Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) never even touched the hand of a woman when taking the bay'ah, and when he spoke to women from behind a screen, and when he explicitly commanded women to adopt hijab, the moulood votaries are advocating the exact opposite. Shall we dare call this expressing love for Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)? What type of lovers are these, who oppose the teachings of the beloved and encourage others to do so? Allah Ta'ala says in the Quran Shareef: *"Say to them (O Muhammad)! If you love Allah then follow me....."* Love for The Rasool is love for Allah. And a sign of loving Allah is following in the footsteps of Allah's Messenger. Therefore, we say that a sign of the love of His Rasool is following in the footsteps of The Rasool (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) Committing sins in public and displaying photographs of these sins to the public is an open declaration of opposing the Law of Allah. Publicising sin is far worse than actually committing sin. Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said that Allah Ta'ala will forgive all sinners except those who openly display their sins.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE OF FALSE BELIEFS

Another evil of devastating proportions is the presence of certain individuals whose beliefs are totally corrupt. One of them was Omar Tijaani, a key figure in last year's moulood who claimed in

one of his talks that he met Shaikh Abdul-Qadir Jailani in Morocco! Amazingly, his audience in that talk never even realized that their intellect was being insulted in no small way. Instead they were all oohing and aahing over this unique revelation of the Tijaani sheikh. Such is the effect of falsehood that it bamboozles the mind and confuses the intellect. Also at the PE moulood was one Sheik Fakhri Owaisi, another individual who holds frighteningly corrupt beliefs. In a separate article we shall outline some of the absolutely weird and amazingly absurd beliefs of

Rasoolullah once said to the Sahaaba in a majlis:

"Shall I not inform you who will be the most beloved to me and the closest to me in my gathering on the Day of Judgment?"

The Sahaaba replied: "Please do tell us, O Messenger of Allah!"

The Messenger of Allah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said:

"He who has the best akhlaaq among you"

Narrated by Imam Abu Ya'la

this Fakhri Owaisi, who also happens to be part of the Medina Institute that operates in Cape Town. By the organisers inviting individuals of corrupt aqeeda and giving them a platform, they automatically become party to the ideology and corrupt belief system of these impostors. They are equally guilty of promoting the haraam beliefs that these misguided people are disseminating.

Almighty Allah commands in the Holy Quran: *"And after a reminder (has reached you, i.e. after being warned of their false beliefs) do not sit with the wrong-doers"* (Surah An'aam, verse 68) Commenting on this verse, Allama Qurtubi quotes Shaikh Ibnul-Arabi and Ibn Khuwaiz Mundaad as follows: *'This verse is proof that to*

sit in the company of major sinners is haraam. He who speaks falsely about the verses of Allah, association with such a person shall be discarded, whether he is Muslim or Kaafir. Likewise our Ulema prohibited sitting in the company of people of bid'ah, displaying closeness to them and listening to their talks. Even debating with them is disallowed.'

Allama Qurtubi goes on to mention the dangers of association with people of bid'ah, and then comments at the end: *'From all that has been mentioned the view of those people is refuted who say that association with people of bid'ah is permissible as long as one does not heed their words and statements.'* (Tafseer-e-Qurtubi)

SYMPTOM OF INSECURITY

In every moulood celebration the speakers from the podium invariably end up attacking those who oppose the customary meelaad celebrations and go to great lengths to prove the permissibility of such celebrations. They will make every conceivable attempt to substantiate their hollow claims from Quran and Hadith. All this is a sign of insecurity, instability, and lack of conviction. They lack the conviction of their beliefs; hence the need to go onto the offensive. These moulood celebrators will go to the extreme extent of distorting verses of Quran and quoting these out of context in order to justify their form of celebration. If they were so convinced of their stance on moulood, what was the need to stoop to this level? Such an attitude smacks of incertitude and faltering. They themselves are not completely satisfied at heart that what they are perpetrating is really sanctioned by Shariah. The Rasool whose love they profess to express, sallallahu alayhi wasallam, had clearly stated: *"Sin is that which troubles the conscience and creates doubt in the mind"* Clearly

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the minds and hearts of these mouloodis are in confusion and doubt, though they will not show it. Their conscience has not accepted this celebration with a degree of conviction. To compensate for this failure and for their incertitude they chose to attack and hit out at their detractors, a typical reaction of people who are cornered. When one attempts to defend a position that has become indefensible the tendency is to lash and thrash out like a drowning man grabbing at straws.

The Tijaani brother, Ahmed Bin Omar behaved like a comedian on stage, ranting and raving at those who spoke out against the customary moulood celebrations. This particular character went to the extent of asking women to divorce their husbands for refusing them to come to the moulood! I leave it to readers to fathom the degree of intellect such statements betray. Bin Omar Tijaani then went a step further by distorting verse 15 of Surah Maryam in another abortive and incredulous effort to prove moulood celebrations from the Quran. Adducing proof by twisting and contorting the Shar'ee texts is indicative of an extremely weak viewpoint. Those who have strong views in Shariah do not need to stoop to a level where the Shar'ee Texts have to be manipulated to achieve results. Such perversion of Deen is a clear sign that the claims made by the mouloodis are defenceless and untenable. If a claimant has a solid case, his proof and evidence would be equally sound and convincing. There would be no need to convolute, distort, and mangle the meanings of the Quran and Hadith. This speaks volumes for the feeble and baseless ideology mooted by the mouloodis.

TIJAANI'S FALSE CLAIM

Bin Omar Tinjaani made the preposterous claim that in Surah 19, verse 15 Allah Ta'ala "celebrated" the birthday of Nabi Yahya

(alayhis-salaam)! What an utter fabrication against the Holy Quran. If Allah Ta'ala wanted to celebrate someone's birthday, it would have been the birth of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam). Let us look at the translation of the verse and see if there is anything in the meaning that could be construed as a celebration. The verse states: *"And peace be upon him (Yahya), the day he was born, the day he will die, and the day he will be resurrected."* Readers can figure out for themselves whether this verse contains anything remotely related to celebration. If the pronouncement of peace upon Yahya on his birthday is considered a celebration, then what will be said about the second part of the verse that states: ... *and peace be upon him.....the day he will die*? Will anyone in his right frame of mind dare claim that Allah Ta'ala is celebrating the day of Nabi Yahya's death by pronouncing peace upon him when he dies? This is enough to expose the fallacious arguments that punctuate the writings and speeches of moulood-celebrating celebrities.

THE PROJECTED PURPOSE OF MOULOOD

The ostensible purpose of these celebrations is to generate love of Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) in the hearts of the audience. A noble objective indeed, but in this case, totally superficial and misleading. The ideal approach in a gathering of this nature would be to educate people about the Sunnah of Our Rasool (sallallahu alayhi wasallam), read to them the Seerah, inculcate love in the hearts for (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and his Sahaaba, love for the Sunnah, describe how to practice on the Sunnah and how this will affect and change lives.; motivate people towards the Sunnah. Instead of imparting good advice and morality to listeners, the moulood celebrators are more bent on attacking their detractors,

insulting their critics, and hitting out at their opponents, all signs of people wallowing in uncertainty and spiritual instability. ❁

TRAVEL RULES OF IMPORTANCE

During these days of vacation many will be travelling locally and abroad. Here are some rules that govern acts of worship while on a journey

- ❁ The traveller is called a *musaafir* in Arabic. There are two conditions for one to be rendered a *musaafir*: a) Travelling a distance of approximately 77.2 kilometres or more; b) staying in one village, town, or city for less than 15 days.
- ❁ The *musaafir* has been granted several concessions by Shariah. These are as follows:
A four rakaats faradh salaah becomes two; the fast of Ramadaan is not compulsory; masah on khuffain can be done for three days and nights; Qurbani is not waajib;
- ❁ If a traveller does not know the direction of Qiblah before salaah, he should firstly use physical means of determining Qiblah. That is, using the position of the sun or the stars, etc. Do not rely only on a compass. That will not suffice. If it is difficult to use these physical methods due to overcast conditions, for example, then one should use one's discretion. Think for a while and see which direction the heart attests to, then follow that direction. Even if it was the wrong direction, the salaah will be valid.
- ❁ If after offering salaah one discovers that the Qiblah was incorrect, the salaah is valid. There is no need to repeat the salaah.
- ❁ When one is seated in a plane and has to offer salaah then one

BIRTHDAYS AND ISLAMIC CELEBRATIONS

Excerpts from an article by His Eminence Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Taqi Uthmani

The birth of the Holy Prophet, Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam, was the most significant and the most remarkable event in human history. Had there been room in Islamic teachings for the celebration of birthdays or anniversaries, the birthday of the Holy Prophet Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam, would have undoubtedly deserved it more than the birthday of any other person. But that is against the nature of Islamic teachings. That is why, unlike Judaism, Christianity, and Hinduism, there are very few festivals in Islam, which provides for only two Eids (Eidul-fitr and Eidul-Adh-haa) during the whole year. The dates of these two Eids do not correspond to the birthday of any of the outstanding persons of Islamic history, nor can their origin be attributed to any particular event of history that had happened in these dates.

Both of these two Eids have been prescribed for paying gratitude to Allah on some happy events that take place every year. The first event is the completion of the fasts of Ramadan and the second event is the completion of Hajj, another form of worship regarded as one of the five pillars of Islam. The manner prescribed for the celebration of these two Eids (festivals) is also different from non-Islamic festivals. There are no formal processions, illumination or other activities showing formal happiness. On the contrary, there are congregational prayers and informal mutual visits to each other, which can give real happiness instead of its symbols only.

No Birthdays

On the other hand, Islam has not prescribed any festival for the birthday of any person, however great or significant he may be.

The prophets of Allah are the persons of the highest status amongst all human beings. But the Holy Prophet Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam or his noble companions never observed the birthday or anniversary of any of them. Even the birthday of the Holy Prophet Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam, which was the most happiest day for the whole of mankind, was never celebrated by the Holy Prophet Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam himself, nor by his blessed Companions.

The Companions of the Holy Prophet Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam, remained alive after him for about a century, but despite their unparalleled and profound love towards the Holy Prophet Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam, they never celebrated the birthday or the death anniversary of the Holy Prophet, Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam. Instead, they devoted their lives for promoting the cause of Islam, for bringing his teachings into practice, for conveying his message to the four corners of the world and for establishing the Islamic order in every walk of life.

The Origins of Christmas

In fact, commemorating the birth of a distinguished person has never been prescribed by any religion attributing itself to divine revelation. It was originally a custom prevalent in pagan communities only. Even Christmas, the famous Christian feast commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ finds no mention in the Bible or in the early Christian writings. It was only in the 4th century after the ascension of Jesus Christ that Christmas was recognized as a regular Christian feast. To quote the Collier's Encyclopedia:

"It is impossible to determine the exact date of the birth of Christ, either from the evidence of the

gospels, or from any sound tradition. During the first three centuries of the Christian era there was considerable opposition in the Church to the pagan custom of celebrating birthdays, although there is some indication that a purely religious commemoration of the birth of Christ was included in the feast of Epiphany. Clement of Alexandria mentions the existence of the feast in Egypt about the year A.D. 200 and we have some evidence that it was observed on various dates in scattered areas. After the triumph of Constantine, the Church at Rome assigned December 25 as the date for the celebration of the feast, possibly about A.D. 320 or 353. By the end of the fourth century the whole Christian world was celebrating Christmas on that day, with the exception of the Eastern Churches, where it was celebrated on January 6. The choice of December 25 was probably influenced by the fact that on this day the Romans celebrated the Mithraic feast of the Sun-god, and that the Saturnalia also came at this time." (Collier's Encyclopedia 1984 ed, v. 6, p. 403).

A similar description of the origin of Christmas is found in the Encyclopedia Britannica with some more details. The following quote will throw more light on the point: *"Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church, and before the 5th century there was no general consensus of opinion as to when it should come in the calendar, whether on Jan. 6, March 25 or Dec. 25. The earliest identification of Dec. 25 with the birthday of Christ is in a passage, otherwise unknown and probably spurious, of the philos of Antioch (c.180), preserved in Latin by the Magdeburg centuriators (i, 3, 118). As late as 245, Origin (hem. viii on Leviticus) repudiated the*

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idea of keeping the birthday of Christ "as if he were a king Pharaoh." (Britannica, 1953 ed. v. 5, p.642)

In original Islamic resources, also we cannot find any instruction about the celebration of birthdays or death anniversaries. Many Companions of the Holy Prophet, Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam passed away during his life-time. His beloved wife Sayyidah Khadijah, radiyallahu anha, passed away in Makkah. His beloved uncle Sayyidna Hamzah, radiyallahu anhu was brutally slaughtered during the battle of Uhud. But the Holy Prophet Sallallaahu alayhi wasallam never observed their birthdays or their death anniversaries, nor did he ever advise his followers to celebrate his own birthday in Rabi'ul-Awwal. ❀

HADITH ON HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

Rasoolullah (sallallaahu alayhi wasallam) said that Allah The Exalted said: "Verily among my servants are such people whose iemaan only remains intact through riches; had I made them poor, they would have committed kufr. And among my servants are some whose iemaan only remains intact because of poverty. Had I made them rich they would have committed kufr.

(Al-'Ilalul Mutanaahiyah)

TRAVEL LAWS

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may face the direction that the plane is travelling. In such cases of necessity, salaah in that manner will be acceptable and valid. Under no circumstances should the salaah be left out on a journey.

❖ **NOTE:** *There is NO concession to commit sin on a journey!*

THE ORIGINS OF MEELAAD CELEBRATIONS

Celebrating the birthdays of Kings and famous people was an age-old tradition among the kuffar nations of the past. Birthdays of kings, high-ranking nobility, and other important figures were always celebrated with huge feasts whilst such dates were invariably declared public holidays. In ancient Egypt, the pharaohs ordered businesses to close on their birthdays and gave enormous feasts for hundreds of servants. In ancient Rome, the emperor gave huge parties in honor of his own birthday, which included parades, circuses, and gladiatorial combat.

THE BIRTHDAY OF NABI EESA (ALAYHIS-SALAAM)

Two centuries after the ascension of Nabi Eesa (alayhis-salaam), the Christians latched onto the idea of celebrating his miraculous birth, though that move was mainly to combat and rival pagan Romans who used to celebrate the birthday of 'the invincible sun god, Mithras' (Naoothubillah), on 25 December. Eventually this date became the 'official' birth date of Nabi Eesa (alayhis-salaam), though today the notion that 25 December is the birth date of Nabi Eesa (AS) has been thoroughly refuted by the Christians themselves. The practice of celebrating birthdays of gods and goddesses was quite common among the Greeks and Persians.

When was the practice of Meelaad started among Mus-

lims? Well, according to Imam Taqiyyud-Deen Miqreezi, a famous historian of the eighth century Hijri, the Fatimid Regime in Egypt were the first people to introduce this concept to Muslims. The Fatimids belonged to the Ismaili Shiah Sect and history bears mute testimony to the atrocities that this regime perpetrated against Sunni Muslims during its reign over Egypt and surrounding Muslim lands. These people claimed to be descendants of Hazrat Fatima (Radiyallahu anhaa) but Allama Ibni Katheer has debunked this claim as spurious and false. Instead, he states that the progenitor of the Fatimid clan was actually a Jewish slave who had embraced Islam. Ibn Katheer then goes on to enlist a host of brutalities and destruction that the Fatimids carried out against Muslims and their properties. (See Al-Bidayah wan-Nihaayah)

Al-Miqreezi narrates that this Regime actually introduced **six types of birthday** celebrations during their rule. These were:

- The Noble Birth of Our Rasool (sallallahu alayhi wasallam)
- The Birth of Sayyidina Ali (radiyallahu anhu)
- The Birth of Hazrat Fatima (radiyallahu anhaa)
- The Birth of Hazrat Hasan (radiyallahu anhu)
- The Birth of Hazrat Husain (radiyallahu anhu)
- The birthday of the current Ruler.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION

The Deobandi Ulema condemn meelaad, but they have Seerah Jalsas and Sahaaba Jalsas. So what's the difference between the two? Both are the same, for meelaad is also a Seerah Jalsa. Therefore, if one is a bid'ah, the other should be bid'ah, too. Please comment.

ANSWER

There are major differences between the customary meelaad celebrations of today and the Jalsas conducted by our Ulema. It is, therefore, unreasonable and unfair to compare the two. Consider the following major differences:

MEELAAD CELEBRATION	SEERAH JALSA
Intermingling of sexes	Strict hijab. In some Jalsas women are not catered for
No education of the Seerah.	Intense focus on educating the Muslim masses
No emphasis on Sunnah	Strong emphasis on Sunnah
On-stage entertainment with drums	No stage and no entertainment with drums
Rendering of Salaam and Qiyaam	No Salaam and Qiyaam
False beliefs related to the above	Since there is no Salaam and Qiyaam there can be no belief of any sort attached to these practices.
Lecturers of doubtful background and Aqeeda	Lecturers from Ahlus-Sunnah and of correct Aqeeda

These are some of the big differences between the two gatherings. As is evident, it is highly erroneous to draw a comparison between the two types of gatherings.

Q: A man has 2 wives he divorces the 2nd wife and then passes away after she completes her iddat. Does the divorced wife inherit from her deceased ex husband?

A: The divorced wife will not inherit from her ex-husband because at the time of his demise she was already out of his nikah. The iddat expired while he was still alive. He died after the iddat had ended. For the law of inheritance to apply, the nikah must be intact at the time of death.

Q: A woman died leaving behind children. Among the children there was a daughter who pre-deceased (died before) her mother. Does that daughter's children and husband inherit from what would have been her share of the mother's estate?

A: This daughter will not inherit from the mother because when she died this daughter was not alive. When a person dies then only living heirs inherit, not relatives who had passed away before the deceased.

Q: Why is astrology haraam?

A: Astrology is the study of the position of stars and planets in space with the belief that these bodies influence human behaviour and that events can be predicted through such study. Studying astrology or believing in it is haraam because it contains elements of shirk. Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) prohibited people from believing that rain would fall because of the position of certain stars in the heavens. In several ahadeeth the Messenger of Allah (alayhis-salaam) called this an act of kufr. This is exactly what astrology is all about. Our belief is that all events in this world happen through the Permission and Will of Allah. Nothing in the creation of Allah can influence or precipitate any happening. The horoscope that people use to predict future happenings or the outcome of actions is also not permissible in Islam. To believe that stars foretell or have an effect on our lives is an act of shirk, and so not permissible.

Q: Is it permissible to wear hemp shoes or clothing?

A: Hemp is another name for the cannabis plant or marijuana, which is used as an intoxicant. To smoke this is haraam. However, the plant itself is not impure or najis. So clothing manufactured from it is not haraam. It is, therefore, permissible to wear clothing and footwear made from hemp fibre.

Q: Is it permissible to wish Christians 'Merry or Happy Christmas'?

A: To do this is haraam. We cannot wish kuffar well for a festival or event that has religious significance in their eyes.

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Q: There are some learned people who often give advice by looking into the Qur'an and seeing if something is good for you. Example: a friend of mine got proposed, her parents went to this learned person to "see" if the guy was compatible. He looked into the Qur'an and said that if they marry their daughter off to that guy then their marriage will not last, they will get divorced.

My question is: how does this man see into the Qur'an and can tell what will happen in the future? Isn't it fortune telling?

A: Looking into the Quran and attempting to predict or forecast a future event is haraam. This is the fatwa of our senior Muftis. The Holy Quran is for our spiritual guidance and not to foretell unknown events of the future. This is definitely akin to fortune telling. Even though it is a learned person doing this, the act is still haraam. This man should be notified of this ruling, and in future, refrain from going to such a person for advice.

Q: Can salaam be made to someone while athaan is being called out?

A: During athaan it is not permissible to make the salaam to another. And if anyone makes the salaam while athaan is in progress, it is not necessary to reply.

Q: We have only two daughters. Is it permissible to appoint them as executors in our Will?

A: It is permissible to appoint your heirs as the executors of your will. However, the executors must be informed of their appointment.

Q: Is it permissible to give zakaat to my son-in-law who is in financial difficulty?

A: Yes, you are allowed to give your zakaat to your son-in-law provided he qualifies for zakaat.

Q: We were out hunting and the time of Asr salaah was running out. There was water within the required radius but had we gone to fetch the water, the Asr salaah would become qadha. So we made tayammum and offered our Asr prayers. Was this correct?

A: If you were sure that water was available within the stipulated radius of 1.6 km then it was not permissible to make tayammum even if the time of salaah was about to end. One has to go and fetch the water and make wudhu, then make qadha of the salaah that was missed. In your case you had to get water for wudhu even if the Asr salaah became qadhaa.

Q: A woman had a miscarriage after a month of pregnancy. Thereafter the womb was cleaned out. If bleeding occurs, will it be considered nifaas?

A: Nifaas is the blood that flows after the emergence of a baby whose limbs have been formed. There are no limbs on a one month old fetus; therefore, if there is any bleeding it will certainly not be nifaas. If the bleeding lasts for 3 days then consider it as haidh. Allah Ta'ala knows best.

Q: I would like to take bay'at with a Shaikh. Can you advise me how to go about selecting a Shaikh for this purpose.

A: Having a Shaikh is crucial to one's spiritual reformation. Here are a few important points to look for when selecting a Shaikh:

- He must be one who follows the Sunnah fully.
- He must have proper and true knowledge of Deen.
- He must be certified by a senior and reputable Shaikh above him to make mureeds and to take bay'at.

- When you listen to him, your knowledge on Deen increases
 - When you see him make amal on Shariah, you develop fikr or concern for the aakhirat
 - When you associate with him, you develop love for Allah and detachment from the dunya.
- These are basic things you need to look for in a Shaikh. If you cannot observe these things first hand then you need to find out from other qualified people in your locality.

*Successful indeed is he
who has purified the soul
(Surah Shams, verse 9)*

THE ORIGINS OF MEELAAD CELEBRATIONS

(Continued from page 7)

Each of these birthday celebrations was a festival on its own. Thousands were splurged on eating, feeding, drinking, music, dancing and other frivolities, not to mention the other acts of bid'ah involving rituals and customs. Being Shiah, they had other shirk and kufr customs that formed part of their Meelaad celebrations.

This then, was how the Meelaad or Maulood came to be introduced to the Ummat; by a *kaafir Shiah sect known as Ismailis, in the fifth century*. Ulema are unanimous that the Ismaili Shiah are kaafir.

While the Fatimid Shiah regime had managed to impose their customary birthday celebrations on the Muslims in Egypt, nowhere else in the Muslim world were such celebrations held. Not in the Haramayn, not in Iraq, not in Syria, not even in Turkey. ❁

HELP US TO ASSIST ISLAM

Darul-Uloom Abubakr provides full-time Hifz and Aalim course studies to a diverse range of students. We also operate the following projects:

- ❖ **Maktabas (primary madrasahs) in the Eastern Cape:** The Darul-Uloom oversees several maktabas in Port Elizabeth and its surrounds. This involves sending out inspectors for assessments and exams, supplying syllabi and text books, and holding workshops for teachers.
- ❖ **Eastern Cape Muslim Prison Board:** Providing Islamic education and guidance to Muslims incarcerated in Prison. This entails sending teachers and spiritual care workers on a regular basis; responding to letters and questions from offenders; sending regular Islamic literature into the prisons.
- ❖ **Al Farouq Newsletter:** The mouth-piece of Darul-Uloom Abubakr containing articles on a diverse Islamic topics as well as Q and A
- ❖ **Islamic Publications:** Printing of Islamic books and Maktab Textbooks.
- ❖ **Fataawa Service:** The Darul-Iftaa or Department of Fatwa deals with numerous questions on Islamic matters from all over the world on a daily basis.
- ❖ **Juma Khateeb:** We co-ordinate the appointment of lecturers and khateeb for most of the masajid in Port Elizabeth
- ❖ **Da'wah outreach programs:** Ulama and students are sent to outlying towns in the Eastern Cape for purposes of propagating Islam and interacting with Muslim communities. Sometimes our students join local jamaats for this purpose.
- ❖ **Da'wah to non-Muslims:** The Darul-Uloom provides booklets and learning for reverts, and also interacts with da'wah groups for the purpose of disseminating Islamic teaching and belief to non-Muslims. Our Ulama regularly participate in lecture programs at universities and seminars.
- ❖ Social and welfare activities among local Muslims.

To support any of the above projects or to sponsor students studying the Holy Quran, you may deposit lillah or zakaat funds into the following banking account:

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Those who spend their wealth in The Path of Allah day and night, in private and in public, for them is their reward in full by their Lord, and there shall be no fear for them (in the future) nor shall they regret (the past) (Quran 2: 274)

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